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THE
SUBSTANCE
OF A
SERMON

PREACHED AT THE
PARISH CHURCH OF ST. BOTOLPH,
BISHOPSGATE.



[Price SIX - PENCE.]

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T H E
S U B S T A N C E
O F A
S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE
Parish Church of St. *Botolph, Bishopsgate,*
On SUNDAY the 17th of *March,* 1782;

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE
LONDON DISPENSARY.

Published at the Request of the STEWARDS.

DEDICATED (by Permission) TO THE
Right Hon. the EARL of SHELBURNE,
One of His MAJESTY'S Principal Secretaries of State,
A N D
PRESIDENT of that CHARITABLE INSTITUTION:

By HENRY PECKWELL, D. D.
Chaplain to the Most Honourable the Marchioness of *Lothian,*
and Rector of *Bloxham cum Digby* in LINCOLNSHIRE.

——pro jucundis aptissima quæque dabit Christus;
Carior est illi Homo, quam sibi——

L O N D O N :

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TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
W I L L I A M,
EARL OF SHELBURNE.

ONE OF
HIS MAJESTY'S Principal Secretaries of State, &c.

My LORD,

AT the request of the Stewards of the LONDON Dispensary, this Sermon makes its appearance in the world. By your Lordship's permission it presumes to claim the honor of your patronage. The humane sentiments which disposed your Lordship to become the president of that charitable institution, I am persuaded, prevailed to extend your protection to what, it was thought, might be a support to the minds of the afflicted, and induce their fellow-creatures to bestow or enlarge their contributions.

The purity and simplicity of the Gospel of CHRIST were never calculated to excite the admiration, or court the acceptance of the wise and prudent : but the streams of the living fountain of truth, flowing in benevolence and charity to the sons of men, have astonished and overwhelmed even the objections of its most inimical opposers.

If there were any thing prejudicial to the interests of mankind, or that could, possibly, hurt the best feelings of an individual, it would have been ill-judged to have commended it to your Lordship's protection. But it must be allowed, that to bear the character of persons, to whom the Judge of quick and dead will say, I was an hungred and ye gave me meat, naked and ye clothed me, and sick and ye visited me; neither in the most serious moments of life, in an hour of death, or day of judgment, can be a dishonour to the most exalted station, or create remorse in the most feeling mind.

At this alarming crisis of public affairs, when, by the providence of God, it has pleased His Majesty to place your Lordship in so distinguished a situation, that the
eyes

eyes of Europe, and hopes of the British nation are raised towards you, permit me, my Lord, to express my warmest wishes that your Lordship may be directed by that wisdom which cannot err, and that your great abilities and exertions for the peace and prosperity of your country, may be crowned with success, in restoring it to its former splendor and greatness, and to a happy, honourable, and permanent union with our brethren in America,

I have the honor to be,

With the greatest respect,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

and most humble Servant,

Charlote Street, Portland Place,

MARCH 28, 1782.

HENRY PECKWELL.

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A

S E R M O N.

J O H N xi. 3.

LORD, BEHOLD HE WHOM THOU LOVEST
IS SICK !

TO the fountain of compassion, a petition of this kind was never put up without being heard,—was never heard without being answered. Humanity will lend an ear to the voice of distress, but it is the genius of Christianity to enter into its feelings—To say *who is weak, and I am not weak—and to mourn with them that mourn.* So Jesus wept.

The Spirit which thus sympathized in the Redeemer, runs through his Gospel. It looks with pity. It speaks with tenderness. When efficaciously directed towards the sons of men, notwithstanding it does not prevent their trials, or steel their sensibility, it gives them more patience and a better support.—It alters the tendency and end of suffering, even when it does not either suspend the blow, mitigate its force, or harden the sufferer.

We find Lazarus, whom Jesus loved, as liable to sickness as any other person. He, who could as easily have curbed the disease as set bounds to the raging ocean, or becalmed the tempestuous wind, chose on this occasion to permit it to take its course. That when it had done its utmost, his glory might appear by a retaliation on death, and a successful invasion on the borders of the grave. Weakness must seek some unguarded moment, or unfortified situation to secure a victory. Almighty power can always command success.

To

To illustrate this general design of affliction and sickness being both permitted and sanctified to the best of men, I shall endeavour, in the first place,

To investigate the character of a person whom Jesus loved.

Secondly, To shew the great privileges that belong to him. And,

Thirdly, To establish what this historical fact evinces—That neither the exalted character he bears, nor the great privileges he enjoys, can exempt him from the sufferings which belong to humanity—or the common accidents (as they are called) of life—but, nevertheless, that all these must eventually work together for his good.

After this you will permit me, I hope, to urge the utility of a charity established to mitigate the sufferings of the poor, to stop the fatal course of disease, and to restore to their masters, friends, and families, a set of men who are at once the riches and sinews of a commercial people.

First, then, in order to investigate the character of a person whom Jesus loves, it will be necessary to shew what Christ hath done for him, in blessing him with *a hope that maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost. For herein, we are told, is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us.*

By the love of Christ upon this occasion, I would not be understood to mean that general compassion which he exercises to all creatures, or that love which causes our heavenly Father to make *his sun to rise on the evil and on the good; and to send his rain on the just and on the unjust;* but a peculiar love which brought himself from heaven, sends his grace to men, and saves their souls from everlasting ruin—a love gracious in its design, sovereign and free in its application, wholesome and beneficial in its effect—a love which dissipates our sorrows, combats despondency, and drives away despair.

From

From these effects this character is to be investigated, and since *the whole need not the physician, but they who are sick*, the first operation of this gracious principle appears in convincing men of sin.

In the dispensations of God towards Israel, we learn, that *he gave them a fiery law*; and it is added, *Yea, he loved the people*. This law was revealed not to give life, but to shew sin; not to afford a remedy, but to point out a fatal disease. It was added, *to make sin appear exceeding sinful*; to make man feel his danger, to shut up every avenue of escape, except that which was opened by the love of God. This law therefore condemns and *concludes all under sin*. It offers no pardon, it knows no mercy. *By works of righteousness which we have done*, it declares *no man living can be justified, for we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God*. A sense of this is called conviction. In it is generally laid the foundation of all the saving knowledge a person whom Jesus loves is blessed with.

with. Its genuine language is *men and brethren, what shall I do to be saved?* It will not admit of being dissipated by the idle, or of being hushed by the clamorous. If disturbed by business or pleasure, it will settle again into a serious enquiry of *what shall I do to be saved?*

It is my business, as an advocate for truth, rather to declare *what is*, than *what ought to be*; for there remaineth not the shadow of a doubt, but that in the divine law “whatever is, is right.” Conviction, therefore, shews the necessity of *bringing in a better hope*, and gives a wound which none but God can heal. *To bind up the broken in heart was Christ anointed*; and,

Secondly, Them whom *he has loved with an everlasting love*, he draws with loving kindness, that they may *acquaint themselves with God, and be at peace*. The gospel of his grace points to *the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world*; and thro’ his merit opens a way to avoid disgrace, and to the enjoyment of eternal honour.

Turn-

Turning to this strong hold the prisoner of hope finds a refuge from the curses of a broken law, from the sword of incensed justice, and from the wrath of an offended God. There is no other name given among men whereby they can be saved. Other physicians are of no value. Jesus alone is able to heal a broken heart: he bore in his own person, imputatively, the guilt of his people; actually, the punishment due to their crimes. Greater love can no man shew than to die for his friend; but he died for his enemies, to reconcile them by his death, and preserve them by his future life. When this important truth is received by faith, it evangelizes the heart, and effectually converts unto God—it produces a manifest change of mind (μετανοια) which disposes it to admire and to adore the divine attributes, as they shine forth and are glorified in a crucified Redeemer. Now, and not before, earthly glory is eclipsed and excelled. Christ and he crucified becomes the object of the sinner's faith

his

his love, and his joy. To him, *to live is Christ, to die is gain.* Upon every view that can be taken of a present life it appears, that *to be dissolved and to be with Christ will be far better.*

This change is so necessary, that without it man *cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.* The happy effect of it is sincere repentance, and a mourning for him whom we have pierced. The desires of the soul become the request of the lip, and of the converted sinner it is said as of Paul, *Behold, he prayeth.* When depth of sorrow, or a weight of guilt makes vocal prayer too difficult a task, He that seeth in secret perceives and answers the heaving sigh, or falling tear. Contrition in every shape is acceptable: for thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and revive the heart of the contrite.—

Great

Great as the composition of this character must appear to a person *whom Jesus loves*, he farther imparts a willing mind to be obedient to his revealed will. Convinced of sin, converted unto God, his desire is, to devote to his service the *purchase of his blood*. *He gave himself to redeem from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people zealous of good works*. The necessity of good works is founded upon the declaration of God. Their use is to glorify his name, to strengthen the evidences of his people, and to be beneficial to mankind. They cannot procure his favour, or stand the test of his justice. They are fruits of his grace. They follow upon our justification, which is free through the blood and obedience of Jesus, and are the native streams of *whatsoever is born of God*. This zeal for the glory of God, and the good of mankind, was most conspicuous in his character, who was not only the sacrifice for our sins, but the great example set before us to follow,—

and it enters very deeply into that of a *person whom Jesus loves*.—To this we are all exhorted by himself, *Let your light so shine before men that they seeing your good works may glorify your Father who is in Heaven*.—Thus have I endeavoured to investigate, this amiable character, and shall sum it up in the words of the prophet Micah, *He loves mercy, he does justly, he walks humbly with HIS God*.

In the second place I am to shew the privileges which belong to this person, and here at first I must exclaim with *the disciple whom Jesus loved*, *what manner of love is this that we should be called the sons of God!* a privilege which secures his favour and protection, by every bond that is held most sacred among men. It excites his pity, it claims his affection, it encourages a prodigal to return with confidence to his father's house where there is bread enough and to spare.—Such is paternal regard when divested of human infirmity, that the scriptures tell us, when a

woman

woman shall forget her sucking child and not remember the son of her womb, our heavenly father will never forget whom he loves, and has engraven on the palms of his hands.

To this distinguishing name may be added, what the same apostle mentions as the effect of the saviour's love.—Banned to the isle of Patmos, for his saviour's and his conscience sake : where no man cared for his soul, no creature was near to solace his retirement. Solid reflection of the goodness of his God, and revelations of his favour sweetened his fleeting moments, and constrained him to cry out, *To him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood be glory for ever more.*—Where is the person who knows his sins are blotted out, but will heartily unite with this beloved apostle. To him, to him, be all the glory who devoted his person to ignominy and shame, and poured out his blood willingly and cheerfully, *to wash us from our sin.* There

is no condemnation to him who is in Christ Jesus, who shall lay any thing to his charge? God justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? Christ died. Free from guilt ; acquitted by God ; happy in the sense of the remission of his sin, he enjoys a peace which the world can neither give nor take away.

To the knowledge of forgiveness of sin, I will only add the privilege of being persuaded that he is faithful who hath promised, as unchangeable in his love as inflexible in his justice. The happiness of this person does not stand upon precarious ground. The love of Christ has removed every objection to its continuance, by putting an end to sin, and bringing in an everlasting righteousness,—by the fountain that is opened to wash away the guilt, and the grace that is exalted to subdue the power of iniquity.—Implanted in the heart we find *the fear of God*, to prevent a final departure from his truth and ways,—and in the record that God has given of his covenant, is himself bound, never
to

to forsake his people or cease to do them good. — On these principles does the apostle of the gentiles triumphantly say, *I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

To these glorious views of redeeming love, God forbid that we should remain strangers, or that to such important necessary saving truth, we should stop our ears. Living and dying without being humbled for transgression or turning unto God, must be attended with *fearful looking for of judgment*, and followed by dreadful expressions of God's displeasure. To the arms of his mercy therefore let us flee. Joy unspeakable belongs to a believing soul, *there is joy in heaven over a repenting sinner.*

From these inestimable privileges however, let it not be thought, will arise
either

either an exemption from trouble, or an insensibility to it. It may be said, that a man beloved by this redeemer will be screened from all suffering, or that his heart will be so gratefully affected by a sense of an escape from the just punishment of his demerit, and of the greatness and security of his salvation, that what deeply wounds others, will be to him but as a blunt or spent weapon, which instead of piercing his armour will fall at his feet. The history of God's people evinces the contrary.—And it was easy to shew,

Thirdly, That neither the exalted character he bears, nor the great privileges he enjoys, can exempt him from the common lot of humanity.

Trials are permitted for the wisest purposes. They succeed in all the different stages, till we arrive at the last in human life. In this train is sickness. The efficient cause is God, the meritorious, sin. Where no sin is, *then the wicked cease from troubling; and the weary are at rest.* As
guilt,

guilt, and danger, and punishment attended sin, so did sickness and pain. We ought not however to imagine that they who are afflicted are sinners above others, any more than were *the Galileans, upon whom the tower of Siloam fell.*—Sickness is as often sent to try the godly, as to punish the ungodly.—In both it will terminate in the glory of God.

In Job we see the trial of patience, in Abraham of faith, in Hezekiah the effect of prayer, in the case of Lazarus of the power of God. For neither the support that was afforded Job, nor the friendship with which Abraham was honoured, the lords care of Hezekiah, or his love for Lazarus was appointed to prevent trials, which reduced one of them to sit and moan upon a dunghill, and laid another level with the dust.—Affliction not only tries the christian virtues of his people, and gives glory unto God, but “it teaches
“us compassion by the experience of sor-
“row,” and shews us how to follow his
steps

steps who *learnt* not only obedience but sympathy *by the things that he suffered*.

When it is not the will of God to prevent, he will sanctify, overrule, or relieve our trials. As he is sovereign in the disposal of them and of his creatures, so we find him appoint agents for these purposes of his will, as may best promote his own glory and the good of his people. Angels are ministering servants to the heirs of salvation ; we see one employed at the pool of Bethesda, to stir the water and impart the healing balm.—Prophets were employed to instruct the sinful in the way to peace ; and one of them was commissioned to point out to the King of Israel a remedy for his disease. In general however, men, considered merely as of the same species, are called upon by religion and providence to exercise toward each other that brotherly love and tenderness which some always do, and every one sooner or later may, stand in need of.—But where even this compassion fails, his expedient

expedient for relief does not. If Lazarus should be neglected at a great man's door, unpitied and unrelieved, the very dogs shall be employed by him, whose service the lordly master is unworthy of, to apply the only remedy to the unfortunate man which they ever make use of for themselves, fulfilling, as it were, while the rich man forgets, the duty of doing as he would be done unto.

These considerations of present support and future good, lead me to urge the utility of the charity for administering advice and medicines to the poor, either at the dispensary, or at their own habitations.

When the arm of industry is unstrung by disease, and a weeping family beholds the head, by the sweat of whose brow it has long been cloathed and fed, distracted with pain and distressed with sorrow ; it is the business of this charity, under God to wipe away the falling tear, to dispel the gloomy views of the distressed fe-

male and furrounding infants, and to afford, *without money and without price*, a remedy, as necessary to the comfort of the patient as to the support of his family. Nor is this merely the picture of imagination. It happened not long since that a fever raged in one of the streets near to the dispensary, it desolated some houses, reduced others to a lonely widow or a forsaken orphan. When it pleased him whose providence watched over all to make use of the advice and medicine of this dispensary, to stop its progress and soften its effects. To restore the head of the family to his wonted labour, and to the community many useful and industrious members.

It is with pleasure I reflect that as the application is for so valuable a purpose, so it bears the best appearance of success. The spirit of my countrymen, I speak as a Briton, is a spirit of generous compassion. Magnanimity is its parent, its employment a sympathetic condescension to the miseries
of

of mankind. It never rose to such a height among the ancients. It is become almost proverbial among the neighbouring nations. They say, “ we build palaces for “ beggars and hospitals for kings.” To this consideration it must be added I plead in a metropolis, the first for humanity and piety as well as commerce in the known world. It were impossible to plead in vain with the citizens of London, even if strangers were the objects of relief; how much less when it is their neighbours, their labourers, and the industrious poor of a very large, extensive, and valuable manufactory. Necessary and useful as this species of charity * must always be, it derives additional force at

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present

* As love towards God is the parent of charity towards men, so is piety the best friend to sound policy. For the necessity of the name, word, and ordinances of God being revered by a nation immersed in an unsuccessful and ruinous war; see a word of advice published by me on the approach of the late fast, and now subjoined to the end of this discourse.

present from a war as unsuccessful in its progress, as it was unhappy in its origin, and must, I fear, if continued, be fatal in its effects. While the devouring sword therefore cuts off our youth, and the bellowing cannon destroys our countrymen, let us seize this and every opportunity, of restoring health to, and preserving the lives of our fellow citizens and fellow subjects.

These are the persons I recommend to your benevolence. Harden not your hearts against them. *If a man see his brother have need and shutteth up his bowels of compassion, how dwelleth the love of God in him. If you love not your brother whom you have seen, how can you love God whom you have not seen.* It may be said, the objects of such a charity are sometimes the most worthless, who have brought upon themselves the calamity they labour under. It may be so. But still they are of the same species, and nothing human is so foreign from ourselves*, as not to demand
our

* Nihil humani a me alienum puto.

our pity and challenge our assistance. The objection was well answered by a philosopher (*οχι ανθρωπω αλλ'ανθρωπινω*) I relieve not so much a particular man as human nature; so the religion of Jesus points out the miserable as objects of compassion, by whatever means their misery may have been contracted. It demands love to enemies, and expects that wine and oil be poured into the wounds of an afflicted Jew even by a Samaritan.

Deceive not yourselves. Consider who made you to differ. Remember the hill of prosperity is not so strong but it may be removed. No bitter reflection will attend what I am anxious you should abound in. The following contrast will evince the truth of what is advanced. Let every one that hears me take his choice. When the *welfare of Job had passed away like a cloud, and days of affliction had taken hold upon him*, it did not increase his misery or add anguish to *the arrows of the Almighty*, to reflect that *when God preserved him,*

him, and his children were about him, He had been eyes to the blind and feet to the lame, that the blessing of him that was ready to perish, (perhaps for want of advice or medicine) came upon him, and he caused the widows heart to sing for joy. That him, as an elegant writer expresses it, “no poor
 “man could upbraid for having withheld his due; him, no unfortunate
 “man could reproach for having seen and despised his sorrows.”—Whereas when the pomp of life was passed away, and the purple robe laid by, a certain rich man who had lived unto himself, unmindful of a poor, sick, wounded brother at the gate;—at that time, when the righteous rest from their labour and sorrow, poor unhappy mortal! he heard a voice from a person he called his father; saying, *son remember! that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented.*

Can any man hesitate one single moment!—Is not Job's sanctified affliction,
 to

to be preferred to this poor wretch's fate? In your last departing moments, will it not be better to look back with chearful thankfulness, to what God has made you the instrument of bestowing, than to feel cruel remorse accompanying the guilt of having forgotten or forsaken the poor in their sickness and pain? It will. Go therefore, and do *as you would be done unto*, and as you will wish you had done, when time shall be no more.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Page 3, l. 6, for loved, read loves.

Page 14, l. 13, for was, read is.

l. 23, for then, read there.

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